

# Our Community

## Environmental Commitment

### Overview

Los Alamos National Laboratory is committed to following all federal and state laws, regulations and requirements in its operations, and to minimizing any harm to the environment caused by its activities.

### Waste Management

- The first permeable reactive barrier, designed to stop the flow of contaminants off Laboratory property, has been installed in Mortandad Canyon.
- The Laboratory is making one shipment of transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant each week and is on track to remove all previously stored TRU waste from Area G by 2010.
- All but 32 cubic meters of legacy mixed low-level waste has been disposed (95 percent complete from an initial inventory of 600 cubic meters)
- In 1993 the Laboratory generated 307 metric tons of hazardous waste. In 2002 it generated only 16 metric tons, a 95 percent reduction from the baseline.
- In 1993 the Laboratory generated 1,987 cubic meters of low-level waste. In 2002 it generated 372 cubic meters, an 82 percent reduction.
- In 1993 the Laboratory generated 2,780 metric tons of sanitary waste. In 2002 it generated 1822 metric tons, a 35 percent reduction.

- Since 1993 the Laboratory has reduced its use of toxic release inventory chemicals by 68 percent.
- The Laboratory used 337 million gallons of water in 2002, a reduction of over 38 percent from previous years of peak usage. Conservation measures provided this water savings despite increased mission work.

### Water Modeling

A Laboratory-developed aquifer model shows slow flow and significant dilution effects in the deep aquifer beneath the Laboratory. LANL hydrogeologists developed a computer model that illustrates groundwater movement over time and, for the first time, predicts deep aquifer flow from the Pajarito Plateau area eastward beneath the Rio Grande. Proactive community and Tribal interactions are still underway to share the model's predictions and implications for water supplies in the tri-county region.

The Laboratory undertook the aquifer-modeling project as part of its ongoing environmental monitoring and surveillance



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*Committed to a healthy  
environment for future  
generations*

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activities. LANL scientists regularly analyze deep and shallow groundwater samples, as well as water from Los Alamos water-supply wells, for the presence of potential contaminants including metals, organic compounds or radioactive materials.

All water samples collected to date from Los Alamos drinking water supply wells meet all federal drinking water standards.

Twenty-seven regional-aquifer and five intermediate-aquifer investigation wells are being regularly monitored; five new monitoring wells were drilled this year.

### Other Environmental Progress

- The Laboratory is embarking on an accelerated environmental cleanup schedule that should complete environmental remediation work and legacy waste disposition more than 15 years sooner than originally planned.
- The Laboratory has fully characterized and taken corrective actions on more than half of the 2,200 identified potential release sites that resulted from legacy operations.

### Awards

Then-Governor Gary Johnson presented *Green Zia Environmental Excellence Awards* to five Laboratory employees and programs in 2002 to recognize their efforts in pollution prevention.

The Laboratory's major service subcontractor, Johnson Controls Northern New Mexico, earned Green Zia Achievement-Level recognition for its strong commitment to pollution prevention.

The New Mexico Recycling coalition recognized Los Alamos National Laboratory for its 2002 *Excellence in Federal Facility Solid Waste Diversion Award*.

The Laboratory is the recipient of the 2003 *Excellence in Environmental Planning Award* from the Federal Planning Division of the American Planning Association.



Working together to ensure water quality in the acequias.



*Los Alamos National Laboratory is operated by the University of California for the U.S.  
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